

A meeting of the Personnel Committee at the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority was held on Thursday, October 02, 2014 in the McKenna Conference Room of 560 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island, at 8:40 a.m.

Committee Members in attendance:

Mr. Robert Delaney, Chair

Mr. John Howell

Mr. Daniel Egan

Mr. Christopher Feisthamel, designee for General Treasurer Gina Raimondo.

Ms. Christine Jenkins

Ms. Faith LaSalle

Committee Members absent:

None

Also attending:

Ms. Gail Mance-Rios

Mr. Joseph Palumbo, Legal Counsel

Mr. Charles Miller

Ms. Linda Makhlouf

Ms. Dana Peterson-Fatuda

Ms. Winnie Antos

Mr. Kevin Elliott

Mr. Steve Strycharz

1. Mr. Delaney called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

2. Discussion of Waytogo & CollegeBoundfund Personnel Positions:
Mr. Delaney stated that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the issues of hiring additional staff for the WaytogoRI and CollegeBoundfund programs, the Assistant Administrator, Community and Planning Services. Mr. Egan asked how does this relate to the reduction of staff and hiring of this position. Ms. Mance-Rios stated, the reduction is in the loan division and this single hire is for the WaytogoRI and CBf programs.

Ms. LaSalle asked about the candidate, does that person have the same rights as unionized employees, and could exercise their rights for the Leave to Protect Act. Ms. Mance-Rios replied, yes that person will have the right to return to their former position.

Ms. LaSalle stated she is concerned with revising the Strategic Plan, she stated we owe it to the public, and the General Assembly to stay within the perimeters set forth by our Strategic Plan. Ms. Mance-Rios stated we did include this position in the Strategic Plan and the FY2015 Budget request.

Ms. Mance-Rios replied, currently we have one person in WaytogoRI, who is running the day-to-day operations and trainings. We've had trainings, with more to come, and the enhanced ILP has been added. The former person has knowledge of this program and would come in "hitting-the-ground running". Additionally, that person will oversee CBfund and the new CBbaby program, emphasizing the marketing of WaytogoRI with the new CBbaby program. This position will reconnect with RIDE and help develop the ILP element, continue communications with OHE, DLT and our partners. Not having someone in that position has made WaytogoRI move slower, and the investment in the program has been too important for us, schools, and our partners to let the program stall. We just don't have the internal staff to push this program forward stated Ms. Mance-Rios.

Mr. Delaney stated the person who gets the position should be able to fundraise, grant write and have marketing ability.

Ms. LaSalle suggested that RIHEAA management put together a written document that explains “why RIHEAA is here”.

Mr. Feisthamel stated he needs to see the matrix of WaytogoRI.

Mr. Howell stated he is on the other side and likes the new hire and knows they have the experience that is needed for the job.

Ms. LaSalle stated she is not opposed to filling this position, but would like Ms. Mance-Rios to revisit the Strategic Plan and revise the numbers.

Mr. Egan agreed with Mr. Feisthamel.

Ms. Jenkins asked if we could push back the start date of the candidate. Ms. Mance-Rios replied we could lose the candidate.

Ms. LaSalle stated the agency with the help of Attorney Palumbo needs to revise the Strategic Plan, cut the expenses and table the new hire until November. We will soon be looking at the renewal of the XAP and CBF contracts, and staffing within the Strategic Plan. Ms. Mance-Rios stated this position was included in the Strategic Plan and the Budget.

Mr. Delaney asked is the committee approving the hiring set forth by the Acting Executive Director. Further, the Committee can make a recommendation and the Acting Executive Director can take it into consideration.

A motion to pause the hiring for this position to allow the review of the Strategic Plan at the October Board meeting was made by Mr. Egan and seconded by Mr. Feisthamel.

Voted in Favor: Ms. LaSalle, Mr. Egan and Mr. Feisthamel

Voted against: Mr. Howell

Abstained: Ms. Jenkins

A letter to the candidate that the Personnel Committee recommends delaying the hiring for this position will be created by Ms. Mance-Rios.

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.